

Conus marmoreus Linne

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VIC. BR. BULL. NO. 270

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2013

NOTICE OF MEETING

The next meeting of the Branch will be held on the 19th of August at the Melbourne Camera Club Building, cnr. Dorcas & Ferrars Sts South Melbourne at 8pm.

New branch member Kathleen Hayes will speak on what farm conditions boost abalone resilience to transport stress? Kathleen is a University of Melbourne student and is studying conditioning methods to prepare abalone for the stress of live export.

The September meeting will be on the 16th and this will be a members night.

Raffles & Supper as usual.

The last 100 issues of the Vic. Branch Bulletin will shortly be available in pdf form on the MSA website.

Articles for inclusion in the bulletin are always welcome.

Michael Lyons Tel. No. 9894 1526

Printed courtesy of Steve Herberts Office, Parliamentary Member for Eltham

Live *Pyrazus ebeninus* (Bruguière, 1792) located at Andersons Inlet.

Back in the last century, 29 January 1995 to be exact, Angus Hales went fishing at Mahers Landing near Inverloch in Andersons Inlet. Along with the usual haul of fish he brought home a large shell with a live animal that he thought was unusual. It was easily identified as *Pyrazus ebeninus*, a shell usually associated with muddy, estuarine habitats in N.S.W. with some Victorian records from far East Gippsland. "Coastal Invertebrates of Victoria" shows the most westerly occurrence around Lakes Entrance. Beach specimens while not common at Inverloch are certainly not rare. The explanation of the shells being fossils does not account for the occurrence of a live specimen.

Mahers Landing is not a particularly attractive area for beach-goers due to the muddy sand so visits have not been frequent. Occasionally visits have been made for short periods but no further specimens had been found. Due to the nature of the preferred habitat, it was suggested that perhaps the species lived further up the Inlet towards the entrance of the Tarwin River but access to the area is difficult.

On 5 March 2013, Janet Davies and I decided to spend one of the low tides looking around Mahers Landing. Initially the high tide line was followed, in an easterly direction with *Ophicardelis ornata*, *Phallomedusa solida*, and *Tatea rufilabris* being located in a dry area covered with saltbush and rushes on the inland side of the low sand build-up above the high tide line. As the tide went out leaving shallow pools of water, *Nassarius pauperatus* and *Salinator fragilis* were found. While wading through one of the larger pools, a shell was spotted which was readily identified as a sub-adult specimen of the elusive *P. ebeninus*. Further searching in the pool yielded no further specimens.

We did not venture further up the Inlet as the tide was due to change and some investigation of the small weed-beds was also on the agenda. Sieving revealed a few *Tornatina* specimens and bivalves, including *Mysella donaciformis*, *Mysella dromanaensis*, *Lepton trigonale*, *Arthritica semen*, and *Legrandina bernardi*.

Recently, Heather Gardner has informed us that she has also found a living specimen at Mahers Landing. Some years ago, the late Clarrie Handreck found a living specimen at San Remo.



Mahers Landing, 5 March 2013.



Mahers Landing, 29 January 1995.

T. Joan Hales.

Name changes in Naticidae, Polinicinae.

A paper published late in 2012 presents a "first phylogenetic analysis of a group of species taxonomically assigned to *Polinices* s.l. based on molecular data sets." The results confirm the validity of five genera (*Conuber*, *Polinices*, *Mamilla*, *Euspira* and *Neverita*), four of which have in recent years been used as subgenera of *Polinices* s.l. Also the results indicate a possible close relationship of this group of genera to the genus *Sinum*, traditionally placed in its own subfamily Sininae.

On the local scene, the genus *Conuber* Finlay & Marwick, 1937 is defined not on shell characters but by the fact that all species lay a “large sausage-shaped gelatinous egg mass without sand incorporation.” *Conuber* has three species: - *C.conicus* (Lamarck, 1822) *C. sordidus* (Swainson, 1821) *C. incei* (Philippi, 1853).

Though not mentioned in the paper, the eastern Victorian *Polinices melastomus* (Swainson, 1822) possibly belongs here too. As an aside, the latin *uber* is neuter in gender, so really the adjectival species names should be *conicum* and *sordidum* and *melastomum* if that species proves to belong to *Conuber*.

To the genus *Neverita* Risso, 1826 is assigned our species *N. aulacoglossa* (Pilsbry & Vanatta, 1908) with type locality Port Phillip Bay. *Neverita* is characterized by its depressed shell shape, ovate aperture, large parietal callus, greatly enlarged body whorl, and umbilical area containing a large distinctive funicle. *N. aulacoglossa* has long had an on again off again synonymy with the tropical Indo-Pacific *N. didyma*, (Röding, 1798). The results presented in this paper indicate that *N. didyma* is more closely related to *N. reclusiana* (Deshayes, 1839), *N. delessertiana* (Récluz in Chénu, 1843) and *N. duplicata* (Say, 1822).

A large part of the paper deals with the Indo-Pacific species usually known as *Polinices mamilla* (Linnaeus, 1758). This is now separated out into four named species:

P. mamilla (Linnaeus, 1758): up to 60mm long, protoconch brownish to black of at least two whorls, operculum light brown, Indo-west Pacific from Easter Island to Red Sea.

P. jukesii (Reeve, 1855): up to 34 mm long, protoconch white of 1.25-1.5 whorls thicker than in *P.constanti*, operculum light brown, central Indo-Pacific, eastern Australia.

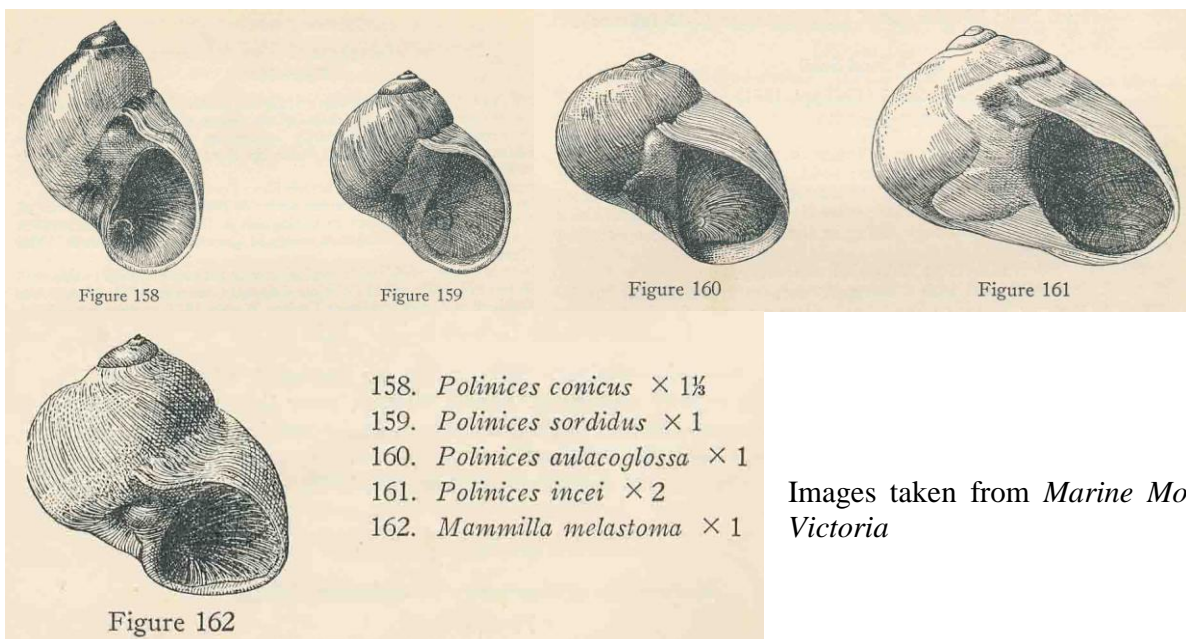
P. constanti Huelsken & Hollmann, 2012 (new name for *Polinices dubius* Récluz, 1844, non Römer, 1836): up to 32mm long, protoconch white of 1.25-1.5 whorls narrower than in *P.jukesii*, operculum light brown, central Indo-Pacific, eastern Australia.

P. cf. tawhitirahia Powell, 1965: up to 20mm long, protoconch white of 0.9-1.75 whorls thicker than *P.constanti*, operculum entirely black, New Zealand, north Western Australia, Indonesia, Japan.

Reference:

Huelsken, T., Tapken, D., Dahlmann, T., Wägele, H., Riginos, C., and Hollmann, M. 2012. Systematics and phylogenetic species delimitation within *Polinices* s.l. (Caenogastropoda: Naticidae) based on molecular data and shell morphology. *Organisms, Diversity & Evolution* (2012) 12: 349-375.

Robert Burn



Images taken from *Marine Molluscs of Victoria*

Here is the comment from Tim Flannery on the decline of museums

"... dismal is the fate of the various state museums. Long bastions of scientific expertise, particularly in the vital work of taxonomy (identifying and classifying species), they, too, were once in the front line of conservation efforts. The Australian Museum in Sydney offers one example of how low things have sunk in the state museum sector. When I joined its staff in 1984, over thirty researchers were employed, divided between more than a dozen specialist departments which covered much of Australia's fauna. Today there are just twelve fully qualified, full-time researchers left in the institution. Gone are the full-time, permanent curators or research scientists in the departments of reptiles, fish, archaeology, palaeontology, arachnids (spiders), minerals and echinoderms. The Australian public need to know how it is that our precious and unique creatures will be preserved if there is nobody left who is able to identify them."

This is from:

Flannery, T. F. (2012). After the future. Australia's new extinction crisis. *Quarterly Essay* 48: 36

May Meeting notes

Don Cram exhibited a photograph of himself and his family by the Murray River at Nangiloc taken on 01/01/1969. On this date he collected *Notopala hanleyi*, a species which now appears to be extinct in the Murray. Don also showed a photograph of Jack Austin in the billabong at Old Elsey Station, Mataranka, Northern Territory taken on 18/07/1982, looking for specimens of *Austropeplea vinosa* under water lily leaves. Don also reported that examination of the radula taken from a cowry collected by Simon Wilson in Tasmania confirmed the shell to be *Notocypraea angustata* and not *N. declivis* as first thought.

Simon Wilson exhibited some recent finds taken whilst diving including a fresh dead huge 33.2mm *Notocypraea piperita* from Stony Point, *Amoria undulata* from Stony Point, *Notochlamys hexactes* from 2 metres of water at Sorrento, *Notocypraea comptonii* from Diamond Bay, *Notocypraea comptonii* from Cape Banks SA, *N. angustata* from Pelican Point SA and examples of *Cassis pyrum*, *Cassis semigranosum* and *Notochlamys hexactes* from off Portsea.

Geoff Macaulay exhibited chiton and Sepia specimens from South Africa, *Haliotis robertsi* from 100 metres of water off Cocos Island (off South America), a *Pleuroploca lyonsi* from Madagascar and shells he has obtained from Somalia and New Zealand. Geoff also showed shells he had collected locally including *Penion mandarinus*, *Notocypraea*, and a small dead turrid, possibly *Macteola anomala* all collected from Sorrento.

Chris Bunyard showed some examples of hybrid *Haliotis rubra* and *H. laevigata* shells from an abalone farm at Port Fairy. Shells exhibited sculpture of *H. rubra* and colouration of *H. laevigata*. Chris also showed specimens of *Penion mandarinus* from Port MacDonnell and an *Acanthochiton kimberi* from 12 fathoms of water off Seacliff in South Australia.

Michael Lyons displayed recent additions to his collection including a large *Cosmetalepas concatenatus* from 6 metres at Stony Point, *Coralliophila wilsoni* and *Notochlamys hexactes* from 18 metres off Portsea and some "tiger" striped examples of *Clanculus undatus* from 30 metres of water off Southern Tasmania.

June meeting notes

Geoff Macaulay tabled recent editions of *Vita Malacologica* and *Spirula* published by the Netherlands Malacological Society and a revision of the Pinnidae in *Acta Conchiliorum* published by Club Conchylia from Germany. Geoff also displayed specimens of land snails and marine shells from around the world including an *Acatina* from Zaire and a *Lyria archeri*.

Michael Lyons displayed a variety of colour forms of the Pecten, *Semipallium aktinos*. He also described a recent exploratory dive beneath the jetty at Crib Point. Conditions were poor with limited visibility with brachiopods being extremely common. Species of mollusc seen included *Notocypraea comptonii*, *Fusinus undulatus*, *Semipallium aktinos* and *Prototyphis angasi* amongst the species of molluscs seen.

Michael Lyons

Dive Log 2013 16

24.07.2013 Point Franklin, Portsea

Buddy Michael Lyons

Entry 2200 Time 75min Slack water approx 2220

Vis 10m Temp 12deg Calm Full moon slightly cloudy Depth 17m

We entered the water on the east side of Point Franklin after a walk around the point with small waves lapping at us on the way despite it being low tide. We then surface swam out to the marker before descending into about 3-4m on sandy bottom and working our way out North to the rubble grounds. On the sand a few trails were present and I saw a couple of nice smaller *Terebra kieneri* and *Guraleus cf brazieri*, but in general there was little in the way of interesting molluscs.

Many fish were about including Stingrays, Leatherjackets, Boxfish, Parrotfish and what I thought was a catshark but at 1.5m was possibly a seven gill shark, also a single common seadragon. After about 20mins and beginning to think this was a "not much to find" night I spied my first seen live specimen of *Daphnella botanica*. It was actually on the inside of a VB bottle and was obvious because of its foot and the oblong shell which at first I thought was a Mitre. On the underneath of this and similar bottles were a few specimens of *Ischnochiton cf variegatus* with lovely pink/green spotted colour patterns.

Plenty of dead angel wings *Pholas obturamentum* were around and then I spotted the largest *Notogibbula bicarinata* I have seen, followed by a nice fresh *Coralliophila cf mira* with hermit crab, also some live *Eutriphora armillata*, *Microcolus dunkeri* and a large dead *Terebra brazieri*. A hermit crab was also displaying a large fresh *Ancilla marginata* like a beacon on a lump of sponge. With the current picking up after at least 30min on the deep ground we headed south west and back towards shore, I almost bumped into a large *Notochlamys hexactes*, a nice specimen of 51mm, which will probably have a purple-brown colouration once cleaned.

After a solid swim back into the current we exited on the west edge of the point and struggled back to the cars. In my BC pocket I also found I had nonchalantly picked up a very dead specimen of *Terebra albida* which will hopefully clean up OK and a small broken *Phasianella* with an exquisite pink/red pattern. Getting changed there was no one at Portsea until we were just about to leave when a car pulled up and spied us looking at the collecting bottle with a torch. A man jumped out and started to query us about what we had seen and was interested in squid of which we had seen none. When asking what was in the bottle I remarked just a few shells. The fellow got back into his car and was heard telling his mate in a desultory manner - "just picking up shells, chuckle chuckle".

Geoff Macaulay

***Orbitestella decorata* Laseron, 1954: Victoria's smallest gastropod.**

A single live-taken specimen of this minute species was sorted from grunge remaining after the main subtidal samples had to be discarded because of undue heat and lack of time to process the samples. Locality: Crib Point pier, Westernport, 4 February 2012, 20m depth from mixed sponge ascidian, bryozoans and hydroid samples.

The present specimen is about 0.75mm in diameter and the transparent glossy shell has a broad translucent reddish brown band spiraling around the dorsal surface of the whorls. A pair of small black eyes are visible on the head of the animal within the shell, as well as a dark mantle gland somewhat further behind, and the darker stippled digestive gland in the apical whorls. *Orbitestella decorata* appears to be less strongly sculptured on both dorsal and ventral surfaces than *O. bastowi* (Gatliff, 1906) which also occurs in Victorian waters. However *O. bastowi* has stronger smooth peripheral keels, whereas in *O. decorata* these keels are crossed by oblique ribs.

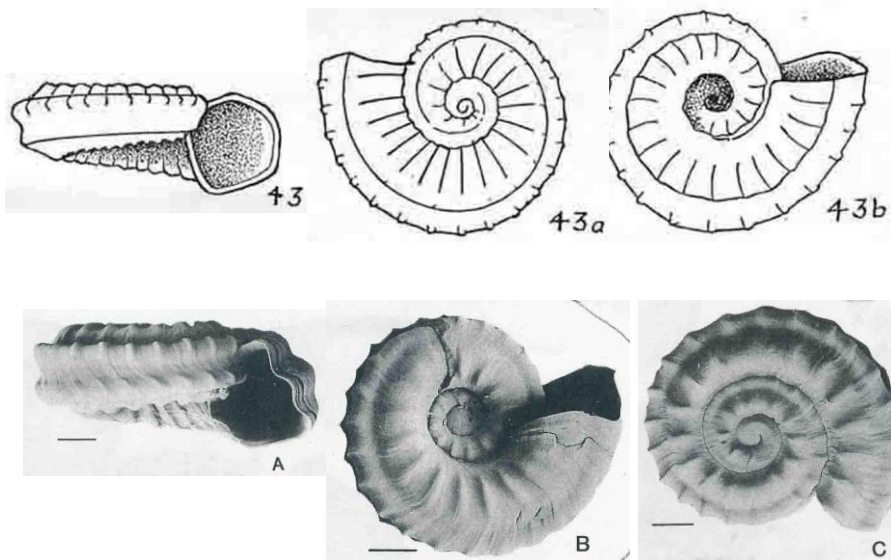
In years long gone past, Charles Gabriel exhibited a specimen of *O. bastowi* as Victoria's smallest shell at the annual FNCV Nature Show held in the Melbourne Lower Town Hall. He also showed this specimen at his talk on "Rare Victorian shells and where to find them", presented at the second public meeting of the

Malacological Society of Australia in February 1953. He had obtained this specimen from between French and Phillip Islands during the Easter weekend FNCV dredging party organized out of Stoney Point in April 1904. As *O. bastowi* attains about 0.9mm in diameter, it has now lost its title of smallest to *O. decorata* at 0.75mm. As far as is known, *O. bastowi* has never been taken alive; like a number of other Westernport molluscs, it may be a subfossil species dating back to times of warmer sea temperature.

References

Gatliff, J.H., 1906. On some Victorian marine Mollusca, new species and others little-known. *Proc. R. Soc. Vic.* (n.5.), 19: 1-4.
 Laseron, C.F., 1954. Revision of the Liotiidae of New South Wales. *Aust. Zool.*, 12: 1-25.
 Ponder, W.F., 1990. The anatomy and relationships of the Orbitestellidae (Gastropoda: Heterobranchia). *J. Moll. Stud.*, 56: 515-532.

Robert Burn



Laseron's figures of ---
Orbitestella decorata North Harbour,
 Sydney NSW.

Ponder's figures of ---
Orbitestella decorata
 Port Stephens NSW.

SLUG SWALLOWING DARE LEAVES TRAGIC TALE

Sent in by Dr. Platon Vafiadis

DAVID BRILL

MJA A Sydney man has been left with severe, permanent brain damage after swallowing a garden slug as a dare.

The 21-year-old spent almost two years in hospital with a devastating case of eosinophilic meningoencephalitis, triggered by a roundworm harboured by the slug.

The parasite, *Angiostrongylus cantonensis*, also known as the rat lungworm, is endemic in South-East Asia but has recently spread down Australia's east coast. Typically found in the pulmonary arteries of rats, the worm is passed onto slugs and snails when they feed on rat faeces.

Neurologists reported the unusual — but not unprecedented — case in this week's *Medical Journal of Australia*.

Remarkably, in fact, it closely mirrors the first-ever reported human case of *A. cantonensis* infection. This also occurred in Sydney, in 2001, and also involved a young man who ate a slug as a dare.

The current patient, whose case



attracted media coverage in 2010 after NSW Health issued a warning about eating slugs and snails, is thought to be the first to have experienced a severe case and survived.

He spent eight months in a minimally conscious state, supported by mechanical ventilation.

At the time of writing, the patient had been discharged to a rehabilitation facility with "ongoing gradual improvement", including regaining some control of his limbs. However, he can still only communicate non-verbally.

His treating neurologists, from the Royal North Shore Hospital, said the diagnosis had initially been

challenging. They emphasised the need for suspicion of *A. cantonensis* infection in unexplained cases of acute-onset neurological symptoms and peripheral eosinophilia.

"It is essential to seek a history of consuming raw or undercooked food, and specifically any ingestion of molluscs," they said.

Most cases of *A. cantonensis* infection are mild and self-limiting. However, rare cases of meningoencephalitis have an extremely poor prognosis.

MJA 2013; 198:440-42.

AUSTRALIAN
 DOCTOR

10 MAY 2013

P.S.